

Livestock and Seed Programs
Agriculture Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Stop 0249 Room 2029-S
Washington, DC 20250-0249

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Re-Food Irradiation in the National School Lunch Program:

USDA,

USDA has requested comments on its proposal to buy irradiated foods for its Commodity Purchase Programs, which include the National School Lunch Program. As a concerned citizen of this country I strongly urge you NOT to buy irradiated meat for the National School Lunch Program.

I have lived in a farming community my entire life and the meat I have bought from the local farmers I consider free from antibiotics, hormones, and other growth stimulants as well as harmful pathogens. Unlike the meat I consider the USDA is buying from the meat packing industries I feel this is just the opposite with them. Since 1996 and the year 2000 the U.S. Department of Agriculture has purchased chicken, fowl, pork, or beef from twelve companies that were found to have committed multiple violations of either environmental laws or labor laws or both. Five of the companies that supplied food for the School Lunch Program had large recalls of their products due to suspected or know contaminations.

When considering the source of food for the Federal Nutrition Programs, the federal government appears to disregard the misdeeds of companies with persistent pollution problems and questionable safety practices. Its outrageous that USDA would even consider buying products from companies who irradiate rather than clean up their misconduct while processing. Never before in our history of this country has so many recalls taken place in our food system. Irradiating merely masks the problems of meat processing that results in contaminated meat. It is a mistake to accept irradiated meat as the true solution to our food contamination problem.

In conclusion, every citizen in this country deserves the right to a wholesome food product that is guaranteed safe by federal standards. The sole reasoning for irradiation is only to mask the problems from within the meat packing industries. Our youth and future generation of this country deserve better, than what the USDA is considering doing.

Sincerely,

Melody Torrey

Melody Torrey
14747 ST HWY 129
Unionville, MO. 63565